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Gender and Acceptance in Middle Childhood

Summer S. Braun

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*“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any
unauthorized assistance on this work.”*

Abstract

The present study investigated the associations among gender, gender-typed behavior, and peer acceptance among 4th grade children. The multimethod design of this study allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data. Results indicated that boys and girls engaged in activities stereotypical to their gender, and children were similar to their friends in terms of their gender-typed activities. Peer nominations for academic skills were positively associated with measures of social skills. Additionally, students were most excited about the gender conforming boy and girl, and least excited about the gender nonconforming boy, most often citing masculine activities as reasons why they liked the potential peer, and feminine activities as reasons why they did not like the potential classmate. Children's personal gender scores were also associated with their choice of potential peer. These results are examined in reference to theories of gender development and socialization. The implications of these findings are discussed in terms of their practical application.

Gender and Peer Acceptance in Middle Childhood

Social acceptance in peers is a substantial part of children's school experience. Psychologists have studied a number of positive links between students who are socially accepted and other factors such as academic success and self-confidence (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997; Estell, Farmer, Cairns, & Cairns, 2002). Acceptance is also of importance because of the connections between students who are not accepted. Statistics show that suicide is one of the leading causes of death in children under 14; many of these cases can be traced to ostracization and bullying (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Several studies suggest that in middle childhood, children's acceptance by peers is influenced by their conformity to gender norms (Carter & McCloskey, 1984; Kreiger & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2012). Researchers have studied this phenomenon in detail, which helps psychologists, educational professionals, and parents better understand the children in their lives, and the nature of acceptance in early and middle childhood. In the present study, I aim to examine the relationships between gender conformity and nonconformity and peer acceptance, through children's own reports of their gender-typed behavior and peer reports of social and academic skills.

Social Acceptance in Middle Childhood

Humans are social organisms and require interpersonal interaction. Baumeister and Leary (1995) described the need to belong and the maintenance of quality interpersonal relationships as a basic human drive. The current study is relevant because it investigated this need to belong in the short span of middle childhood, specifically children ages 9-10 years old, when relationships are becoming more intentional and meaningful. Studies of peer acceptance and social networks are underpinned by this innate need to belong and begin with the concept of homophily.

Originally a term coined by sociologists, it literally translates to “love of the same” (Retica, 2006). This phenomenon is used to explain why individuals tend to gravitate towards like-minded peers. People seek out those who are similar to them and make friendships. This concept is seemingly universal and can therefore be observed in elementary school children. Several psychologists further investigated this phenomenon and how it relates to social networks in the classroom to better understand class dynamics (Farmer et al., 2009; Shrum, Cheek, & Hunter, 1988).

As children spend most of their waking hours at school and learn a great deal about social norms through peer modeling, peer groups are exceptionally important throughout middle childhood. Consistent with the concept of homophily, Farmer et al. (2009) found support for the theory of in-group preference in their study of elementary school children. They found that, in response to a question about students who are “most liked” in the class, children nominated those in their friend group, who were similar to themselves in this dimension, more often than those outside of their friend group. Knowing that students prefer children who are similar to themselves provides a platform for which peer acceptance and gender can be examined.

Shrum et al. (1988) further analyzed the concept of homophily, focusing on gender. The researchers analyzed the interaction between gender homophily and racial homophily and found that while gender segregation decreased from 3rd to 12th grade, racial segregation increased until middle school. This study exemplifies that there is much to be learned about the complex nature of homophily and friendship trends.

It is often noted that children socialize in same-sex friend groups (Maccoby, 1990; Shrum et al., 1988; Underwood, 2007). Zimmer-Gembeck, Waters, and Kindermann (2010) aimed to determine if a participant’s gender affected how well they liked another student. They found that

boys liked other boys more than they liked girls. Similarly, they also found that girls liked other girls more than they liked boys, indicating a same-sex preference that persisted until around age 11. They also found that girls were more accepting overall than boys, liking others slightly more than boys.

Martin et al. (2013) examined the origins of this sex segregation and how children choose playmates. One explanation for sex segregation in children is activity homophily; children prefer peers who engage in similar types of activities as themselves. For example, a girl who likes to play with dolls will be attracted to others who play with dolls, regardless of the peer's gender. It happens, however, that most children who play with dolls are girls, so the child's friend group displays sex homophily which originates in activity homophily. Martin and colleagues analyzed sex and time spent in gender-typed activities to determine the contribution of each in the establishment of friendships. Findings suggested that children select playmates based on same sex and similar amounts of time in gender-typed activities. They determined strength of each of these contributors, sex and similarity of gendered activities, in choosing friends, and found that while gendered activities partially contributed to the friend selection, the most influential factor was the sex of the peer.

Sex segregation is important because of its implications on the socialization of boys and girls. Maccoby (1990) theorized that sex segregation causes girls and boys to grow up in completely different worlds, with peers and adults perpetuating the gender norm. In line with this theory, results from a four-year, longitudinal study conducted by Adler, Kless and Adler (1992) discovered that the factors that contribute to popularity are distinctly different for boys and girls. Boys' popularity depended primarily on athletic ability. Research by Daniels and Leaper (2006) also supported this finding, as they found connections among peer acceptance,

sports, and self-esteem, in both boys and girls. Popularity for boys also hinged upon coolness; toughness or being defiant of adult authority; acting out; social and interpersonal skills; and academic performance, both good and bad (Adler et al., 1992). Girls, on the other hand, had much less control over the characteristics that made them popular, as they were mainly extrinsic factors: parent's socioeconomic status, clothing, familial wealth, extracurricular enrollment, residential location, permissive or lenient parents, physical attractiveness, precocity, and exclusivity. Girls are then put at a disadvantage because they do not have control over the factors that determine popularity, whereas the nature of the factors that contribute to boys' popularity are aspects that they have the capacity to work at and improve, such as academic performance and athletic ability. In the present study, I focused on associations between peer nominations of social factors, behaviors, and academic skills, similarities in gender-typed behavior among friends, and associations between gender-typed behavior and children's choice of a hypothetical new classmate among 9- and 10-year-olds. Research on sex segregation and activity preferences in middle childhood (Adler et al., 1992; Maccoby, 1990; Martin et al., 2003) informed one hypothesis of the current study: When children are given scenarios of potential classmates, they would be most enthusiastic about the one who is similar to themselves, in terms of shared gendered-activities and sex.

Social acceptance and support has also been researched in relation to academic success. In middle schoolers, social support of students, given by peers, parents, and teachers were related to positive school interest, goals, and responsibility (Wentzel, 1998). Particularly focusing on peer relationships, Ladd et al. (1997) found that peer acceptance was concurrently and predictively associated with positive school performance. Estell et al. (2002) found similar positive trends of peer acceptance and academic success in children as young as first grade.

There is a general consensus that social success is correlated with academic achievement (Estell et al., 2002; Ladd et al., 1997). The opposite side of this coin has also been examined. Children who are rejected are more likely to fail grade levels, drop out, and overall perform poorer academically than children who are considered popular, in addition to having behavior problems in the future (DeRosier, Kupersmidt, & Patterson, 1994; Ollendick, Weist, Borden & Greene, 1992). In the present study, I expected to find positive associations between students who were nominated for being liked most and nominations for academic skills.

Theories of Gender

Gender segregation and engagement in gender-typed activities during middle childhood can be understood through the lens of four theories relating to gender acquisition. These theories help to explain gendered behaviors and findings, and can be used as a basis to better understand the dynamics of gender in elementary school classrooms.

Cognitive-Developmental Theory

Cognitive-developmental theory places emphasis on the individual child. This theory is rooted in the child's value system. Children identify themselves as a boy or a girl, then come to categorize activities and items by associating them with a specific gender. They value the gendered objects and behaviors with which they identify. In an effort to reach cognitive consistency, they actively search out these distinctions and focus specifically on these objects that apply to them (Bem, 1983; Martin & Ruble, 2003).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory hinges upon the idea of gender as a social construct. The qualities associated with being male or female are morally arbitrary, yet become exceptionally important in an individual's self-concept and identity. Children learn what it means to be a boy or a girl

beginning at birth, as parents dress them in blue or pink, and give them dolls or trucks with which to play. Gender development is shaped by environment and social settings as much as through biology (Bandura, 1962).

Feminists who understand gender socialization in this way embody social learning theory. Taking the stance of many behavioral psychologists, Bem (1983) describes social learning theory as emphasizing “the rewards and punishments that children receive for sex appropriate and inappropriate behaviors” (p. 599). Learning also takes place through observation and social modeling. This theory encapsulates its name; gender and gendered behavior is learned through social interactions.

Gender Schema Theory

Psychologists and feminists have merged social learning theory and cognitive-developmental theory to create gender schema theory. This theory incorporates components of each to create a new way of explaining gender development. Like the cognitive-developmental model, gender schema theory revolves around the child’s personal cognitive processing. The individual must be developmentally ready to encode their culture’s information about gender. This theory also views gender as subject to change because it is socially perpetuated (Bem, 1983). Gender-schema theory is a dynamic approach to explaining gender acquisition because it takes both personal and social factors into consideration. Studies such as one by Slaby and Frey (1975) support this theory. Their findings indicated that as children gain a more concrete idea of gender constancy, their preference for observing same sex models increases, suggesting an interplay between developmental readiness and social factors that influence gender development. This theory has been employed to explain a variety of sex differences, from the stereotype of men as the stronger sex and how these factors work to undermine men’s health, to the influence

of gender roles and family support on male adjustment to work environment (Courtenay, 2000; Chen, Lee, Yu, & Shen, 2014).

Social Dominance Theory

This theory asserts that social dominance and anti-egalitarian ideology emerges in high-status groups, particularly men (Sidanius, Levin, Lui, & Pratto, 2000). Men typically control power and resources, and have control over women through these resources (Buss, 1996). This worldview of male dominance has held constant across cultures. Men have higher rates of social dominance orientation than women in six distinct populations: Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, Palestinian Arabs, Americans, Chinese, and New Zealanders. These results suggest the stability of male hierarchy across cultural, national, and religious boundaries (Sidanius et al., 2000). The source of this domination and sense of control stems from a selection of historical and social factors, as explained by social learning and cognitive developmental theory. As such, while these gender differences may be arbitrary and socially constructed, they are consistent in that they maintain male hierarchy.

These theories emerged after psychologists began to focus on gender in the 1960s and 1970s, and needed a platform from which they could explain gender development. The research done in those years has provided a foundation for which the current study can take place. Bates, Bentler, and Thompson (1973) developed the first inventory to assess gender. Those deemed as having a gender problem were those who were highly effeminate. Researchers found that as age increased, less cross-gender behavior was displayed. The aforementioned theories are useful in attempting to explain these findings. Using gender schema theory, this could be explained as the boy, now ready to encode information regarding gender, is shaped by his environment and social factors that push him in the direction of masculine-typed activities and behaviors. Social

dominance theory also contributes to explaining this trend, as masculine activities are valued more than feminine ones, and boys are pressured into keeping up with this image. Now well established, these theories help psychologists better understand gender and are utilized in the present study to conceptualize results.

Crossing the Gender Line

As described in social learning and gender schema theory, much of how gender manifests itself in the classroom is culturally imbedded within our worldview. The social and cultural pressures of conforming to the stereotype make it difficult to cross the gender line. Newkirk (2002) anecdotally describes the imbedded differential treatment of boys and girls in the classroom, many of which can be traced back to sex. Gendered space, for example, is taken for granted in today's schooling. Boys are considered naturally athletic and during recess, they take over the playground while girls are relegated to the corner, participating in quieter, more intimate games. In the classroom, teachers gloss over physical distractions made by boys, adopting the 'boys will be boys' attitude because it is considered an inherent part of being a male. This behavior is not tolerated with girls. Teacher attention is given, and functions, differently for boys and girls. For boys, attention is a reinforcer, and "whether positive or negative, is an unquestioned educational advantage for boys" (Newkirk, 2002, p. 31). Quietly behaving girls are left by the wayside, which could have negative repercussions on their self-esteem and perceived academic status. Through their interactions, teachers unintentionally perpetuate this gendered behavior. Teachers are just one source that influence how children embody gendered behavior.

In terms of gender awareness and relationships, several studies previously mentioned describe children in middle childhood as in critical periods of gender segregation and peer dynamics. Adler et al. (1992) found that in 2nd grade, there were little cross-gender activities,

whereas by 5th grade, students did engage in cross-gender activities. They also found that boys and girls have an awareness and intrinsic need to embody the stereotype relating to their sex; boys had “an awareness of and aspiration to the cult of masculinity” while girls were attracted to the “culture of romance” and flirtatious behavior (Adler et al., 1992, p. 183). While girls who successfully adhered to their stereotype were given higher status among their female friends, they also observed the female domain as having expanded more than the male domain. At the time of their study, girls “could more acceptably pursue the traditionally male avenues of sports, achievement, autonomy...[while] such a cross-over among boys into ‘feminine’ areas was less acceptable...and still negatively sanctioned” (Adler et al., 1992, p. 185). If this trend has continued to grow, boys would have remained isolated within the realm of masculine activities, whereas girls would have been freer to cross over this culturally created line of masculinity.

An interesting study by McGuffey and Rich (1999) delved deeper into this phenomenon of crossing the gender line or “gender transgression zone.” Peer reactions of children who crossed the gender line across nine weeks at summer camp were telling. In several explicit examples, the researchers found that boys who engaged in feminine typed activities, or appeared marginally feminine were ostracized and stigmatized from their male group. “The threat of being labeled gay [was] used as a control mechanism to keep boys conforming to the norms of hegemonic masculinity” (McGuffey & Rich, 1999, p. 619), and aided in exerting the masculinity and heterosexuality of the speaker. This is not the only study to have found boys to be stringent in enforcing male stereotypes on other boys (Garrett, Ein, & Tremaine, 1977).

While boys were very critical of other boys who transcended the gender boundary, girls, on the other hand, showed more variability in their acceptance of nonconforming peers than boys (McGuffey & Rich, 1999). Researchers found some of the top ranking girls to be feminine, but

when girls participated and succeeded in the masculine sphere, their female peers congratulated them. In specific instances where a girl outplayed boys, and were threatened by their masculine counterparts, regardless of age or race, girls banded together to combat the male dominance. The research by Adler et al. (1992), McGuffey and Rich, and the theory of social domination informed my hypothesis regarding gender conformity and acceptance. Specifically, I expected that children would be more accepting of gender nonconforming girls than gender nonconforming boys, and that boys would reject nonconforming boys more than girls would.

In terms of girls entering the masculine sphere, boys first tried to make them feel inadequate by marginalizing their skills, through tactics such as ignoring them (McGuffey & Rich, 1999). Those who did succeed displayed athletic ability and emotional detachment. They were also stripped of their feminine gender identity and conceptualized as masculine. In this way, the masculine sphere was protected as it maintained the traditional gender roles instead of expanding to include feminine ones. Girls were generally more lenient towards both boys and girls in the gender transgression zone. As opposed to girls entering into the masculine sphere, the acceptance of individuals into the feminine sphere hinged upon their “niceness” and they were held to the same “niceness” standards as those in the female group.

Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2012) also contributed to this field of knowledge through research regarding individual students’ engagement in gendered activities and their peer acceptance. Results showed that for both boys and girls, engaging in masculine activities predicted high peer acceptance, while participating in feminine activities predicted low peer acceptance. I expected that similar trends would emerge in the current study.

The Present Study

Considering the importance of peer social acceptance in middle childhood, the current study investigated the association among gender, gender-typed behavior, and peer acceptance among 4th grade children. First, I explored the extent to which girls and boys differed in terms of masculine and feminine scores. Consistent with previous research (Kreiger & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2012; Martin et al., 2013), I hypothesized that boys would have higher masculine scores than feminine scores, girls would have higher feminine scores than masculine scores, and that boys would have higher masculine scores than girls. Second, I explored the relationship between an individual's engagement in gender-typed activities, and that of their friends'. Informed by the work of Shrum et al. (1988) and Martin et al. (2013), I expected that gender homophily would emerge from the data in that reciprocal friends would have similar masculine and feminine scores. Third, I examined whether peer-nominated academic skills were associated with peer-nominated social skills. Based on information regarding boys and girls acceptance, I hypothesized that boys who were liked most would also be nominated for being good at sports (Adler et al., 1992; Daniels & Leaper, 2006). I also expected that there would be connections between students who were liked most and other academic skills (Estell et al., 2002; Ladd et al., 1997). Finally, I examined whether gender-typed behavior was associated with a child's gender and preference for a hypothetical new classmate. Based on the research of McGuffey and Rich (1999) and Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2012), I hypothesized that gender nonconforming girls would be more accepted than gender nonconforming boys. Additionally, I expected that participants would cite feminine activities for reasons why they did not like girls who conform to the feminine stereotype and boys who did not conform to their stereotype. I was also interested in the relationship between gender and peer preference with regards to participant's own

engagement in gendered activities. Consistent with the theory of homophily, I hypothesized that participants who were most excited about having a gender conforming boy join their class would have higher personal masculine scores than those who were most excited about the gender conforming girl (Martin et al., 2013). Similarly, I expected that participants who were most excited about the gender conforming girl joining their class would have a higher feminine score than those who were most excited about the gender conforming boy. While past literature conceptualizes findings in terms of sex, the present study examines gender, as students were asked their gender identify as a girl or boy.

Method

Participants

Participants included 54 Year 5 students, the equivalent of American 4th graders, who were 9 or 10 years old ($M = 10.33$, $SD = 0.38$). Students came from three English primary schools located in Southampton, England. Participation from Year 5 students varied from 25% - 56% (see Table 1). Of the 19 students from school A, 8 were male and 11 were female. At school B, 9 were male and 6 were female; participants at school C consisted of 5 males and 15 females. In total, there were 22 male and 32 female participants.

The Rollins Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study. Parent Informed Consent Forms were sent home with students. Parents were given background information about the study and students returned the forms. Before the start of the study, and after being briefed about the purpose and procedure, students who had returned the parent forms signed a Student Informed Assent Form. Participants were gathered through an opportunity sample and their confidentiality was assured; only students who had obtained parent consent participated in the

study. One student decided to withdraw from the study, and his results were not included in calculations.

Materials

The majority of data obtained from participants was in survey form (see Appendix A). The survey was informed by the work of Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2012). Participants completed the survey at desks in the classroom, or in a quiet location outside using clipboards. A writing utensil was needed for each student. Pencil and paper were required during interviews to record participants' responses.

Incentives to participate varied at each school according to policy. One did not allow any type of compensation, another used a ticket system, and the final school permitted the use of candy. Microsoft Excel, SCAN, and SPSS were used to analyze the data.

Procedure

In order to follow ethical guidelines, I briefed all Year 5 students about the study, and distributed the Parent Informed Consent Forms one week prior to the study. It was emphasized that only students who had returned the form could participate in the study. The following week, those who had returned the parent form were taken, individually or in groups of up to 15, to complete the survey portion of the study. I again briefed participants about the purpose of the study and the procedure for the survey (see Appendix B). The Student Informed Assent Forms were collected from each participant. This procedure was repeated in classes or groups to ensure that I could manage the number of children and effectively communicate the instruction.

I read the instructions and all questions aloud so that those with lower reading levels would not skew the data by rushing to complete it, or not fully comprehending the instructions. A pause was given after each prompt, 1-18, for participants to fill in their answers. Directions for

the peer nomination section of the survey were given and participants were prompted to write peers who fit the description for each of the categories. Next, I explained the Likert scales and the read the remaining questions aloud, pausing momentarily for the students to fill in their answers. When they were finished, participants were able to revisit any questions and could continue nominating peers as they saw fit. As they finished, I collected the surveys and when everyone had completed the questionnaire, I thanked the participants and explained that an individual talk would follow.

I individually interviewed participants after they completed the survey. The interviews ranged from directly after completion, to others that occurred the next morning, due to scheduling restrictions. I sat with participants in a quiet classroom or hallway while we reviewed the scenarios presented in the survey, and conducted the interview. I thanked students for their participation and they rejoined the class. Survey results were inputted in Microsoft Excel and SCAN, and analyzed using SPSS.

Measures

Masculine and Feminine Activities

Students assessed the frequency with which they participated in specific activities using a 4-point Likert-type scale (0 = Never, 1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = A lot). Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2012) utilized a similar measure, which was used as a basis for this part of the survey. Participants self-assessed on 18 activities, nine stereotypically masculine activities (e.g., How often do you play videogames? Play football? Watch sports on TV?), and nine stereotypically feminine activities (e.g., How often do you do cartwheels or somersaults? Jumprope? Dance?). From this information, each participant received a masculine score ($M = 1.28$, $SD = 0.71$) and feminine score ($M = 1.02$, $SD = 0.64$).

Peer Nominations

Participants were instructed to identify the first name and last initial of other students in Year 5 who fit various behavioral descriptors. Students nominated classmates who they liked the most, were good at reading (reading), good at math (math), good at sports (sports), and who always do nice things (does nice things) for other students. Participants could nominate up to 10 peers and but could not self-nominate. Scores were standardized within school to account for varying class sizes and levels of participation. Liked most nominations were also standardized within gender to account for same-gender preferences in friends.

Vignettes and Individual Interviews

Four hypothetical scenarios that described potential new classmates were presented to participants. One described a gender conforming boy, a gender conforming girl, a gender nonconforming boy, and a gender nonconforming girl. Information from Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd's (2012) research was also used to create the vignettes. Each scenario included a favorite activity, academic interest, character trait, and physical characteristic that is either in-line or contrary to stereotypical gender norms.

I asked participants who, out of the four hypothetical new classmates presented in the vignettes, they were the most and least excited to have in their class. They were then asked to articulate why they felt that way (see Appendix C). Next, participants were asked to share any additional information during an open questioning session. I took notes during interviews that were later transcribed. Student interview results were coded using a grounded theoretical approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This approach involved reading through the interview transcriptions and focusing on preliminary themes that emerged from the raw data. Operational definitions were then created for each of the thematic categories. Multiple codes could be present

in a single response, and each phrase could be coded individually (see Appendix D). Two researchers coded every participant's response for the liked most question for the presence or absence of each code. Correlations between the coding of the two raters were analyzed, and inter-rater reliability exceeded .87 for all categories, excluding miscellaneous ($r_{\text{masculine}} = 1.00$; $r_{\text{feminine}} = 0.90$; $r_{\text{academics}} = 0.88$; $r_{\text{character}} = 0.90$; $r_{\text{physical}} = 0.90$; $r_{\text{miscellaneous}} = 0.19$). The coders discussed discrepancies together, a clearer definition for miscellaneous was established, and agreement was reached. Responses for the liked least question were examined in the second phase of coding. All categories had an inter-rater reliability of over .85 ($r_{\text{masculine}} = 0.96$; $r_{\text{feminine}} = 0.85$; $r_{\text{academics}} = 0.86$; $r_{\text{character}} = 1.00$; $r_{\text{physical}} = 0.88$; $r_{\text{miscellaneous}} = 0.89$). Discrepancies were again discussed and resolved.

Results

Data were analyzed using SCAN, Microsoft Excel, and SPSS to address my primary research questions regarding the extent to which girls and boys differed in terms of masculine and feminine scores; similarities among friends in gender-typed behavior; associations between peer-nominated academic and social skills; and associations between gender-typed behavior, gender, and preference for a hypothetical new classmate.

Gender Differences in Masculine and Feminine Scores

First, to test the hypothesis that boys would overall significantly higher masculine scores than feminine scores and that girls would have lower masculine scores than feminine scores, I conducted two paired samples *t*-tests, which indicated that, as expected, boys' masculine scores ($M = 1.93$; $SD = 0.37$) were higher than their feminine scores ($M = 0.45$, $SD = 0.32$), $t(21) = 21.58$, $p < .01$, and girls' masculine scores ($M = 0.83$, $SD = 0.50$) were lower than their feminine scores ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 0.05$), $t(31) = -5.68$, $p < .01$ (see Table 2). Next, I tested the hypothesis

that boys would have higher masculine scores and lower feminine scores compared to girls. To do this, I conducted a series of independent samples *t*-tests, and my expectations were supported for masculine scores, $t(22) = 9.32, p < .001$, and feminine scores, $t(32) = -8.58, p < .001$.

Associations Between Gender-Typed Behavior and Peer-Nominated Social and Academic Skills

I first analyzed peer nominations within the entire sample to determine if these dimensions were correlated, and to test the hypothesis that students who were nominated as Liked most by their peers would also be nominated for other academic skills and behavioral traits. Masculine score was negatively correlated with feminine score ($r = -.41, p < .01$), and with does nice things ($r = -.39, p < .01$), and was positively correlated with being good at sports ($r = .39, p < .01$; see Table 3). There were also positive correlations between nominations for liked most and for reading, math, sports, and does nice things (r 's ranged from .52-.67 $p < .001$). Reading was correlated with math, sports, and does nice things (r 's ranged from .44 to .86, $p < .01$), and math was correlated with sports ($r = .56, p < .001$) and does nice things ($r = .40, p < .01$).

Associations were then examined separately within boys and girls to determine if there were any gender-specific associations among the peer nomination variables. Within boys, high masculine scores were also correlated with high feminine scores ($r = .57, p < .01$; see Table 4). High masculine score was also correlated with sports ($r = .48, p < .05$). Additionally, boys who were liked most were also nominated for reading, math, and sports (r 's ranged from .44-.48, $p < .01$), as hypothesized. Math was correlated with reading ($r = .77, p < .01$) and sports ($r = .43, p < .01$).

Among girls, there was a negative correlation between feminine score and nominations for liked most ($r = -.39, p < .05$) and feminine score and reading ($r = -.37, p < .05$; see Table 4). Girls who were nominated for liked most were also nominated for reading, math, sports, and does nice things (r 's ranged from .63-.77, $p < .01$). Students nominated for reading were also nominated for math, sports, and does nice things (r 's ranged from .65-.90 $p < .01$). Math nominations were also associated with nominations for sports and does nice things (r 's ranged from .55-.73 $p < .01$). Sports were also correlated with does nice things ($r = .41, p < .05$).

Similarities in Gendered Behaviors of Friends

Next, to test the hypothesis that gender homophily was present among friends, I examined correlations between children's masculine and feminine scores and the average masculine and feminine scores of their reciprocal friends. Participants' own masculine score was positively associated with the average masculine score of their reciprocal friends ($r = .55, p < .001$; see Table 5). Similarly, participants' feminine scores were associated with the average feminine score of their reciprocal friends ($r = .70, p < .001$).

Preference of a Potential Classmate

To follow up on my investigation of associations between gender stereotypes and peer acceptance among elementary-aged girls and boys, I tested the hypotheses that the gender conforming boy would be more accepted than the gender nonconforming boy, and that the gender nonconforming girl would be more accepted than the gender nonconforming boy. Participants chose the potential classmate they were most excited about having in their class, and the student they were least excited about having in class and the frequencies were determined. In order of raw frequencies, participants were the most excited about the gender nonconforming girl, gender conforming boy, gender conforming girl, and gender nonconforming boy (see Table

6 and Figure 1). Participants were the least excited about the gender nonconforming boy, gender conforming girl, gender nonconforming girl, and gender conforming boy.

I hypothesized that children would cite feminine activities for why they did not like potential peers. Qualitative analysis of participants' responses to why they were most and least excited about a particular student joining their class revealed that participants most often cited masculine activities (e.g., playing football, basketball) when describing why they were excited about the student (see Table 7 and Appendix E). Specifically, the top three reasons cited for why participants were most excited about the potential peer were their engagement in a masculine activity, a specific character trait, and engagement in a feminine activity. Participants most often cited feminine activities (e.g., jumping rope, dancing, doing arts and crafts) when describing their choice for least excited.

Gender Differences in Choice of Potential Classmate

Next, I tested the hypothesis that boys and girls would differ in who they were most and least excited about having in their class. A Chi-square test indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in girls' and boys' preference for a potential new classmate, $X^2(3, N = 54) = 18.52, p < .001$ (see Table 8 and Figure 1). While over 60% of boys were most excited for the gender conforming boy to join their class, less than 10% of the girls felt this way. A Chi-square test indicated that there was also a statistically significant difference in girls' and boys' choice of the potential classmate that they were least excited about joining their class, $X^2(3, N = 53) = 11.75, p < .01$ (see Table 9 and Figure 2). While 41% of boys were least excited about the gender conforming girl and 45% were least excited about the gender nonconforming boy, 32% of girls were least excited about the gender nonconforming girl, followed by 29% who were least excited about the gender nonconforming boy.

Gendered Behavior and Choice of Potential Classmate

Finally, to test my hypothesis that children would select a hypothetical new classmate who was similar to themselves in terms of gender and gender-typed behavior, I conducted a series of two-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) to analyze and compare the masculine scores and feminine scores of students who were most excited about each of the four students described in the vignettes. The first test examined main effects for gender and most excited choice, and the interaction between gender and most excited choice on masculine score. Results indicated a statistically significant main effect for gender on masculine score, $F(1, 53) = 30.03, p < .001$, such that boys ($M = 1.93, SD = 0.37$) had higher masculine scores than girls ($M = 0.83, SD = 0.50$). There was also a moderately significant main effect for most excited choice on masculine score, $F(3, 53) = 2.31, p < .10$ (see Table 10). Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed that students choosing the gender conforming boy had a significantly higher masculine score ($M = 1.74, SD = 0.50$) than those choosing the gender conforming girl ($M = 0.84, SD = 0.52$), $p < .001$, the gender nonconforming girl ($M = 1.27, SD = 0.79$), $p < .05$, and the gender nonconforming boy ($M = 0.93, SD = 0.65$), $p < .05$. Participants who were most excited about the gender nonconforming girl also had significantly higher masculine scores than participants who were most excited about the gender conforming girl, $p < .05$. The interaction between gender and most excited choice did not reach statistical significance, $F(3, 53) = 1.70, p = .18$.

The second ANOVA assessed for main effects for gender and most excited choice, and the interaction between gender and most excited choice on feminine score. Results indicated a statistically significant main effect for gender on feminine score, $F(1, 53) = 27.55, p < .001$, such that girls ($M = 1.42, SD = 0.50$) had higher feminine scores than boys ($M = 0.45, SD = 0.32$). There was not a main effect for most excited choice $F(1, 53) = 1.07, ns$, and the interaction

between gender and most excited on feminine score was not significant $F(1, 53) = 0.29, p = .83, ns$.

Discussion

In the present study, I investigated the associations between gender and gender-typed behavior and social acceptance among elementary school children. My primary research questions explored the extent to which girls and boys differed in terms of masculine and feminine scores; similarities among friends in gender-typed behavior; associations between peer-nominated academic and social skills; and associations between gender-typed behavior, gender, and preference for a hypothetical new classmate. Results suggested that boys and girls engaged in activities stereotypical to their gender and children were similar to their friends in terms of their gender-typed activities. Correlations indicated that peer nominations for academic skills were positively associated with measures of social skills. Students were most excited about the gender conforming boy and girl, and least excited about the gender nonconforming boy, most often citing masculine activities as reasons why they liked the potential peer, and feminine activities as reasons why they did not like them. Children's personal gender scores were also associated with their choice of potential peer, as students who were most excited about the gender conforming boy had higher masculine scores than children who were most excited about the gender conforming girl, nonconforming girl, and nonconforming boy. Additionally, children who were most excited about the gender nonconforming girl had higher masculine scores than those who were most excited about the gender conforming girl.

Traditional Gender Norms: Gender Differences in Masculine and Feminine Scores

Results indicated that boys had a higher masculine score than feminine score, and girls had a higher feminine score than masculine score. Additionally, boys had higher masculine

scores and lower feminine scores than girls. These results are consistent with previous literature, which reveal the traditional gender stereotypes held by elementary-aged students (Kreiger & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2012; Martin et al., 2013). This finding can be explained using gender schema theory (Bem, 1983). By middle childhood, students have a firm understanding of their identity as a boy or a girl. Cognitively, they are able to encode social and cultural information regarding gender, and understand this information with relation to themselves. The ways in which parents interact with their child, both implicitly and explicitly, convey ideas about gender and gender roles and serve to shape children's gender schemas. For example, when parents encourage their son to play baseball and their daughter to take ballet lessons, children encode this information in terms of the types of activities they can and should participate in. Adults reinforce behavior consistent with a child's gender, and may question inconsistent behavior. Peers can also perpetuate norms through explicit verbal reinforcement or implicitly through acceptance or exclusion into a social group (Maccoby, 1990). Social and cultural cues can come from a variety of sources. Young children also learn these roles through social modeling and imitating the behaviors of older children and adults with whom they identify; as gender constancy is developed, so does same-sex modeling (Slaby & Frey, 1975). Bussey and Bandura (1984) also found that children most often exhibit same-sex modeling. In addition, children may look to emulate the behaviors displayed by parents, siblings, teachers, and even characters shown in movies and television. Gender schema theory helps to articulate a possible explanation of how children acquire and exhibit such strong gender stereotypes.

Associations between Gender-Typed Behavior and Peer Nominated Social and Academic Skills

Results indicated that students who were nominated for liked most were also likely to be nominated for reading, math, sports, and does nice things. This is telling of the types of students in the classroom. Consistent with my hypotheses and previous research (Estell et al., 2002; Ladd et al. 1997), these correlations imply that students who excel academically also excel socially. This is interesting to note because of the implications it has for those students who are not well liked by their peers. While many psychologists have focused on students who are well liked, those who have focused on students who are low on the social strata have consistently found that students who do not succeed academically may also not excel socially in the classroom (DeRosier et al., 1994; Ollendick et al., 1992). In addition to the academic stressors, these students may also be coping with social ostracization as their classmates prefer to socialize with those who are good at school. As poor peer adjustment has also been linked with dropping out of school and even to criminality, these students may be at risk for greater problems in the future (Parker & Asher, 1987). Although the present study is correlational and does not show a cause and effect relationship, high or low achievement in either the social or academic sphere may influence achievement in the other domain over time. A longitudinal study that assesses both social and academic success over time would be an interesting follow-up to the present study.

Interestingly, masculine score was negatively associated with peer nominations for does nice things. This may, in part, be explained through the conceptualization of masculine and feminine roles. Traditionally, girls are supposed to embody the pretty, passive, and polite persona; they are the carers. The boys, then, take on the more confident, aggressive, and macho image. Operating under this conceptualization, it is logical that people who engage in masculine

activities will not be nominated for does nice things, because it is inconsistent with the masculine image. Alternatively, one could find this result incongruous with the male image, as boys are traditionally taught to be chivalrous, open doors, etc., thus, there is an argument for doing nice things as both consistent and inconsistent with the masculine image. My findings suggest that, for this particular sample of British children, masculinity is negatively associated with doing nice things, although the cause cannot be determined.

Additional associations emerged when examining the peer nominations for boys and for girls separately. In line with my hypotheses and consistent with Adler et al. (1992) and Daniels and Leaper (2006), boys who were nominated for being liked most were also likely to be nominated for sports. A possible critique of the work of Adler et al. could be its datedness, but as the findings of the current study are still congruous with their findings, it suggests the consistency of athleticism as a top factor in boys' social status over the past 20 years.

Among girls, a particularly interesting finding was that those with a high feminine score, or those who adhere to the traditional gender norm, were less likely to receive many liked most nominations. There may be social pressure not to conform to the female stereotype in order to be well liked in the classroom. This correlation implies an even deeper societal issue: that engaging in feminine typed activities may not be valued, particularly for girls. While second and third wave feminists have pushed to allow both men and women to transcend the gender boundary, feminists do not dismiss those that actively choose to remain within their gender category (Sommers, 2014). Their key message is the freedom to choose without pressure to conform one way or the other. This cannot happen if the feminine role, activities, and behavior are not valued equally to the masculine counterpart, which is what this finding suggests. Alternatively, this negative association could also be attributed to a flawed scale. The prompts inquiring into

feminine activities may be dated and not accurately reflect students' engagement in modern feminine activities. The scale used was adapted from the study by Kreiger and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2012), but still included items such as jump-roping, and playing with dolls, which may now be outdated or inappropriate for their age group.

Similarities in Gendered Behaviors of Friends

Informed by previous research on gender homophily (Martin et al., 2013; Retica, 2006; Shrum et al., 1988), I hypothesized that children would be similar to their friends in terms of their masculine scores and feminine scores. Results supported my hypothesis. There are several possible explanations for the finding that elementary-aged children were similar to their friends in terms of their gender-typed behavior. According to gender schema theory, by this age, children have an acute sense of their identity as a girl and boy (Bem, 1983). As found by Shrum et al., children at this age prefer same-gender peers, who have come to embody the activities that are culturally acceptable for their gender. The two cultures theory explains how this perpetuates stereotypical gender norms; by surrounding themselves with other girls who are socialized to embody feminine stereotypes and engage in feminine activities, and boys who have been socialized to embody masculine stereotype and engage in masculine activities, children are surrounded by two different "cultures," encircled by peers that continue the adherence to these norms (Maccoby, 1990). Thus, it could be that friendship emerges out of an attraction to same-gender peers and the socialization of these groups. On the other hand, Martin et al. (2013) found that children prefer peers who engage in similar activities. It could also be that bonding over similar activities results in friendship, instead of friendship that informs the types of behaviors in which children participate.

Preference of a Potential Classmate

Participants were the most excited about individuals who engaged in masculine typed behaviors and activities, the gender nonconforming girl and gender conforming boy, and cited masculine activities when describing why. Additionally, participants were least excited for those students to join their class who conformed to the feminine stereotype, the gender nonconforming boy and gender conforming girl, and they cited feminine activities when describing their choice. Past research has framed similar results in terms of crossing the gender boundary. It is more socially acceptable for girls to cross into the male sphere than boys into the female sphere (Adler et al. 1992; McGuffey & Rich, 1999). However, this finding can also be explained using the types of behaviors in which these children participate. Similar to the explanation previously discussed regarding feminine score and nominations for liked most, regardless of gender, engaging in more masculine typed activities was correlated with higher acceptance while engaging in more feminine typed activities was correlated with lower acceptance. These results may be just as telling of societal values as it is of crossing gender lines. They suggest that this sample may value the masculine perspective and behaviors more than feminine behaviors, which may also be true of society as a whole. All people are then compared according to the masculine standard; this finding is consistent with the theory of social dominance (Sidanius et al., 2000). As described in gender schema theory (Bem, 1983), how children acquire these ideas can be attributed to socialization. Despite children modeling behavior after same-sex adults, they emulate those who are most successful, those who hold power and authority, which are typically men (Sidanius et al., 2000). While it may be easier for girls to transcend boundaries than boys, this may be attributed to the types of activities in which they engage, and the image that they strive to embody.

Gender Differences in Choice of a Potential Classmate

Results of the current study are consistent with past research (McGuffey & Rich, 1999) and the hypothesis that girls would be more accepting than boys of boys who do not conform to gender norms. Boys were least excited about the gender nonconforming boy at a higher rate than girls. As expected, girls were more lenient with other girls who cross into the masculine sphere, as indicated by the finding that girls were equally excited about the gender conforming girl as the gender nonconforming girl.

Social dominance theory (Sidanius et al., 2000) can also be used to explain why crossing these lines is easier for some than others. Instead of an overlap of two equal status circles, this theory can be conceptualized in terms of a ladder. Girls who adhere to feminine standards are already on the bottom rung, and have no place to go but up, to the masculine realm. Boys, on the other hand, who adhere to the masculine stereotypes, begin on the second rung, and engaging in feminine activities push them down to the bottom tier. Girls, already at the bottom of the ladder, may be more accepting than boys because they have nothing to lose, and have nowhere to go but up. Girls may also feel a kinship towards boys who do not conform to the masculine stereotype because of potentially shared activities. Boys' top reputation as masculine, however, may be threatened by boys who do not conform to this stereotype, one reason for this gender difference in peer preference.

Gendered Behavior and Choice of Potential Classmate

When I analyzed vignette choice with relation to participants' masculine score and feminine score, results indicated that participants who were most excited about the gender conforming boy had significantly higher masculine scores than those who were most excited about the gender conforming girl. One possible explanation for this difference lies in the theory

of homophily (Martin et al., 2013; Retica, 2006; Shrum et al., 1988); people who engage in masculine activities would be most excited for someone like themselves to join their class, thus choosing the gender conforming boy. The same could be said to explain the lower masculine score for those that preferred the gender conforming girl. Those most excited about the gender nonconforming girl had significantly higher masculine scores than participants who were most excited about the gender conforming girl; those who were most excited about the gender conforming boy had higher masculine scores than those choosing the gender nonconforming girl, and the gender nonconforming boy. The theory of homophily helps to explain these trends, as the potential peer is similar to the participant in terms of engagement in masculine activities (Martin et al., 2013).

When examining associations between student's most excited choice and feminine scores there was no main effect of scenario chosen. This could be that while trends were emerging, the sample size was not big enough to show a significant difference. It could also be that when there is overlap in the activities in which these students engage, and they are likely to choose a peer who would be most similar to themselves in terms of gender. For example, a girl who engages in feminine typed activities at a low rate, according to gender homophily theory, would be equally as likely to choose the gender conforming boy as the gender nonconforming girl, but they decide on the gender nonconforming girl because they share the same gender. One possibility as to why there was not a difference in feminine scores of students who were most excited about different peers was that the majority of the variance could be accounted for through the main effect of gender.

Challenges

As with most research, this study was, at times, difficult to execute. The peer nomination section of the student survey initially prompted students to nominate classmates who they liked most and who they liked least. This style of questioning is a standard method of data collection and is very helpful in research regarding peer networks and social dynamics (Farmer et al., 2009; Gest, Domitrovich, & Welsh, 2005). These data would allow the researcher a dynamic approach to this topic by assessing students on the top and bottom of the social strata of their classes. I solicited partnerships from two schools, both of which felt strongly about not using the liked least prompt. The survey was edited to include only the positive nominations. One school continued to reject the use of peer nominations at all, for fear that students would discuss who they nominated with their classmates. This was an unforeseen challenge due to the widespread nature of this method of data collection. In the end, that particular school did not participate in the study. In their absence, two additional schools took part.

There were also challenges during the data collection process. Participants were not required to respond to all prompts. On the activity portion of the survey, a few students left a scale blank, and one participant bubbled two answers for one prompt and left the following prompt blank. In these cases, the scales left blank or those where two responses were bubbled were omitted from the calculation of the participant's masculine score and feminine score. This may have led to an inaccurate assessment of gendered activities.

In the peer nomination section, participants were instructed to identify a classmate using their first name and last initial. Although the majority of participants correctly followed these instructions, several only listed a first name and no last initial, and one student listed only first and last initial. In classes where names did not overlap, this issue was easy to rectify through

crosschecking with a class roster or upon consultation with the teacher. In the event where the nominee could not be identified, this nomination was not analyzed. In future, the researcher should briefly review all surveys as they are submitted to ensure clarity and completion.

Vignettes were standardized to include a favorite activity, academic subject, personality trait, and physical characteristic. Each potential classmate was identified by name. During the interview, participants were asked why they were most excited about one potential peer and least excited about another. Several students reported the name as a factor in their decision. They said that there was already someone in their class with that name, or they did not like someone with that name. In these cases, the researcher rephrased the prompt and asked participants if they would feel the same about the potential peer if they had a different name. Including a name was intended to aid in the visualization of the person described, but may have swayed participants' choice of most or least excited. When repeated, this study should crosscheck names from the survey with class rosters to minimize the probability of name as a deciding factor. Names could also be omitted altogether; potential classmates could be identified using letters or numbers.

One portion of the research was not consistent across all schools. The incentive to participate varied based on school policy. At one school, participants were given tickets that they could use in a token-reward system. At another, participants were not given any incentive. At the third school, which had the highest participation, all students were given American candy upon completion of data collection, regardless of participation. The school with no incentive to participate had the lowest percentage participation. Although there was inconsistency in this aspect, the researcher had little control over this factor. In order for data collection to run smoothly and successfully, the researcher had to adapt to the policies and systems in place at each school.

One student had completed the survey portion of the study, and returned to class to await his interview. When it was his turn, he was engrossed in an electronic game. I offered to wait for him to finish or interview him later, but he said that he no longer wanted to continue with the study. Upon inquiring why, his eyes were locked on the screen and he pointed to the game. This interaction is an interesting aside as it may be telling of the technological age in which we live; a student preferred to play on his device than engage in dialogue with a potentially interesting foreigner.

Future Directions

This study could be replicated with the changes mentioned above: checking each participant's survey for completion and clarity, and working with the school to provide an incentive for students to participate to raise overall participation rate. One school official suggested a method of implied parental consent, attributing the low rate of participation to lack of student-parent communication rather than objection to the research itself. Inquiring into a system of implied consent and the IRB guidelines regarding assent would also be beneficial in potentially raising participation. Increasing participation may lead to significance in some results that are now showing only trends, such as the interaction between liked most choice, gender, and feminine score. Including the liked least nomination would also provide depth to this research. Currently, it can only be concluded that girls engaging in feminine activities are less likely to be nominated for liked most, but it cannot be said that they would be nominated for liked least. These scales are related but slightly different, and knowing connections between class social dynamics and students who are liked least is essential so that teachers can be aware of potential issues.

This age group of 9-10 year-old students was specifically targeted in this study because past research indicates that they are on the cusp of expanding their friendship horizons and transitioning to less stringent gender homophily groups (Shrum et al., 1988). It would be interesting to examine this same topic with students in the two years above and below this age. A cross-sectional study such as this would allow researchers to determine if these results vary with age, and if specific trends emerge as students get older.

Additionally, this research was conducted in the United Kingdom. While the theory of social dominance (Sidanius et al., 2000) suggests that results would be consistent across cultures, it would be interesting to conduct this study in the United States and other non-western cultures to determine the consistency of these findings.

Application

The major contribution of this study is in the fields of developmental and educational psychology. Feminist researchers know that the truth of research only extends to those studied (Hesse-Biber, 2014). These findings are specific to these three schools at this time with these students. However, psychologists look for trends in data that can be extrapolated to a population. These results were consistent across the three schools, showing a level of external validity for these findings. Knowing that these trends exist in the present sample can help teachers be aware of possible trends in their own classes.

Gender conformity or nonconformity only becomes an issue when children feel unsupported and isolated, because they lead to larger issues of depression, self-esteem, and suicide (DeRosier et al., 1994; Ollendick et al., 1992). Regardless of gender, the present study suggests that children who engage in feminine activities are less likely to be socially accepted in the classroom, while children who engage in masculine activities are likely to be well liked.

Knowing this information, teachers and administrators can better understand their classes and be more aware of the social issues that may arise. This information would be helpful to know in the context of bullying and to be aware of potential victims, as bullying is a major cause of death in children (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Instead of working retroactively to rectify a situation after it arises, teachers can work proactively to integrate potentially at-risk students into the classroom by placing value on the traditionally feminine role and being acutely aware of class social dynamics. This research can also be helpful in encouraging teachers to be mindful of the way they treat students and how they may contribute to the perpetuation of gender norms.

Knowing the role of homophily in peer relationships is also important for teachers. They can use this knowledge to structure seating charts, tables, and work groups to better integrate students into the social atmosphere of the classroom. They could group according to already formed peer groups, or by students who engage in similar activities, thus potential friends, or by contrasting activities in the hopes of widening students' peer groups.

The present study adds to past research by studying the interaction between gender and acceptance in a different way. I found that, regardless of gender, individuals who engage in masculine activities are more likely to be well liked than those who engage in feminine activities. The prominent role of activity homophily also emerged from this research, as participants had similar rates of engagement in masculine and feminine activities as their friends; this trend also emerged in students' choice of a potential peer. Knowing the associations between personal engagement in gendered activities and acceptance level is critical knowledge for teachers who strive to create an inclusive and diverse classroom environments for their students. Additionally,

this research adds depth of understanding to classroom social dynamics and can be used by teachers to specifically facilitate friendships and social bonding in the classroom.

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Table 1

School Demographics

School	A	B	C
Total Students	211	378	335
# Y5 Students	33	57	36
# Y5 Participated	18	15	20
% Y5 Participated	54	26	56
% Free Meals	54	46	30
% English as Second Language	12	39	5

Note. School C had the highest percentage participation of Year 5 students. A had the highest percentage of free meals, and B had the highest percentage of English as a Second Language students.

Table 2

Significant Differences in Masculine and Feminine Scores

	MScore		FScore	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Boys	1.93	0.37	0.45	0.32
Girls	0.83	0.50	1.42	0.50
Total	1.28	0.70	1.02	.64

Note. MScore = masculine score; FScore = feminine score. In paired and independent samples *t*-tests, boys' masculine score was significantly higher than their feminine score. Boys had significantly higher masculine scores than girls. Girls had the opposite result. Masculine and feminine scores were significantly different from each other on all dimensions.

Table 3

Associations Between Gender-Typed Behavior and Peer Nominated Social and Academic Skills

	MScore	FScore	Liked Most	Reading	Math	Sports	Does Nice Things
MScore	1						
FScore	-0.41**	1					
Like Most	-0.01	-0.09	1				
Reading	-0.08	-0.11	0.67**	1			
Math	-0.09	-0.15	0.66**	0.86**	1		
Sports	0.39**	-0.19	0.53**	0.44**	0.56**	1	
Does Nice Things	-0.39**	0.24	0.52**	0.56**	0.40**	0.10	1

Note. Many significant associations emerged from the data. MScore = masculine score; FScore = feminine score. Liked most was standardized within school and gender. Reading, math, sports, and does nice things were standardized within school.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Associations Between Gender-Typed Behavior and Peer Nominated Social and Academic Skills by Gender

	MScore	FScore	Liked Most	Reading	Math	Sports	Does Nice Things
MScore	1	0.32	0.08	0.03	0.06	0.12	0.01
FScore	0.57**	1	-0.39*	-0.37*	-0.34	-0.12	-0.28
Like Most	0.09	0.21	1	0.77**	0.77**	0.69**	0.63**
Reading	-0.15	0.07	0.45*	1	0.90**	0.71**	0.66**
Math	0.30	1.9	0.44*	0.77**	1	0.73**	0.56*
Sports	0.48*	0.37	0.48*	0.24	0.43*	1	0.41*
Does Nice Things	-2.2	0.17	0.37	0.37	1.7	0.15	1

Note. Correlations for boys is below the diagonal, correlations for girls is above the diagonal. MScore = masculine score; FScore = feminine score. Liked most was standardized within school and gender. Reading, math, sports, and does nice things were standardized within school.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Homophily within Reciprocal Friends

	MScore	FScore	Reciprocated Friend MScore	Reciprocated Friend FScore
MScore	1			
FScore	-0.41**	1		
Reciprocated Friend MScore	0.55**	-0.54**	1	
Reciprocated Friend FScore	-0.57**	0.70**	-0.40**	1

Note. MScore = masculine score; FScore = feminine score. Reciprocated friend MScore was obtained by averaging the MScore of all reciprocal friends for a particular student. Same was done with reciprocated friend FScore.

**p<.01.

Table 6

Participants' Choice of Potential Classmate

	Most Excited	Least Excited
GC Girl	15	13
GC Boy	17	10
GNC Girl	18	11
GNC Boy	4	19

Note. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Raw frequencies are reported.

Table 7

Reasons Cited for Why Participants Were Most And Least Excited About a Potential Classmate

	Masculine Activity	Feminine Activity	Academ- ics	Character	Physical	Misc	Total
Most excited	33	13	11	15	5	4	81
Least excited	17	27	4	10	5	4	67
Total	50	40	15	25	10	8	

Note. Raw frequencies are reported.

Table 8

Most Excited Choice by Gender

Choice of Most Excited	Gender of Participant		Total
	Male	Female	
GC Girl	2	13	15
GC Boy	14	3	17
GNC Girl	5	13	18
GNC Boy	1	3	4
Total	22	32	54

Note. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Raw frequencies are reported.

Table 9

Least Excited Choice by Gender

Choice of Least Excited	Gender of Participant		Total
	Male	Female	
GC Girl	9	4	13
GC Boy	2	8	10
GNC Girl	1	10	11
GNC Boy	10	9	19
Total	22	31	53

Note. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Raw frequencies are reported.

Table 10

Gender-Typed Score by Gender and Preference for Most and Least Excited

Participant's Choice	Gender of Participant	Most Excited		Least Excited	
		MScore <i>M(SD)</i>	FScore <i>M(SD)</i>	MScore <i>M(SD)</i>	FScore <i>M(SD)</i>
GC Girl	Boy	1.50(0.39)	0.61(0.08)	1.89(0.35)	0.41(0.42)
	Girl	0.74(0.47)	1.40(0.48)	0.92(0.35)	1.00(0.16)
	Total	0.84(0.52) _a	1.30(5.28)	1.60(0.57)	0.59(0.46)
GC Boy	Boy	1.87(0.31)	0.40(0.33)	2.11(0.47)	0.72(0.24)
	Girl	1.13(0.82)	1.22(0.78)	.72(0.52)	1.90(0.48)
	Total	1.74(0.50) _b	0.54(0.52)	1.00(0.76)	1.67(0.65)
GNC Girl	Boy	2.33(0.17)	0.64(0.25)	1.22	0.67
	Girl	0.87(.048)	1.49(0.54)	0.72(0.39)	1.31(0.39)
	Total	1.28(0.79) _{c, d}	1.26(0.61)	0.77(0.40)	1.26(0.42)
GNC Boy	Boy	1.63	.000	1.00(0.34)	0.42(0.23)
	Girl	0.70(0.56)	1.33(0.22)	1.07(0.62)	1.29(0.49)
	Total	0.93(0.65) _{a, d}	1.00(0.69)	1.56(0.68)	0.83(0.58)

Note. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Means with different subscripts indicate statistically significant differences, $p < .05$.

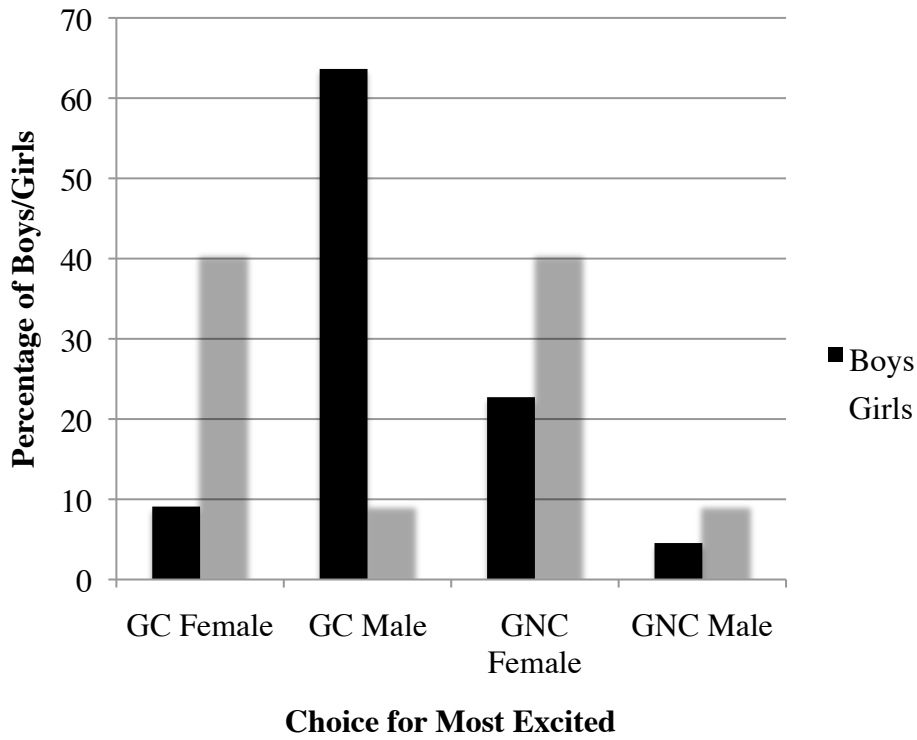


Figure 1. Choice for most excited by participant’s gender. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Boys were most excited about the GC boy. Girls were equally excited about the GC girl and GNC girl.

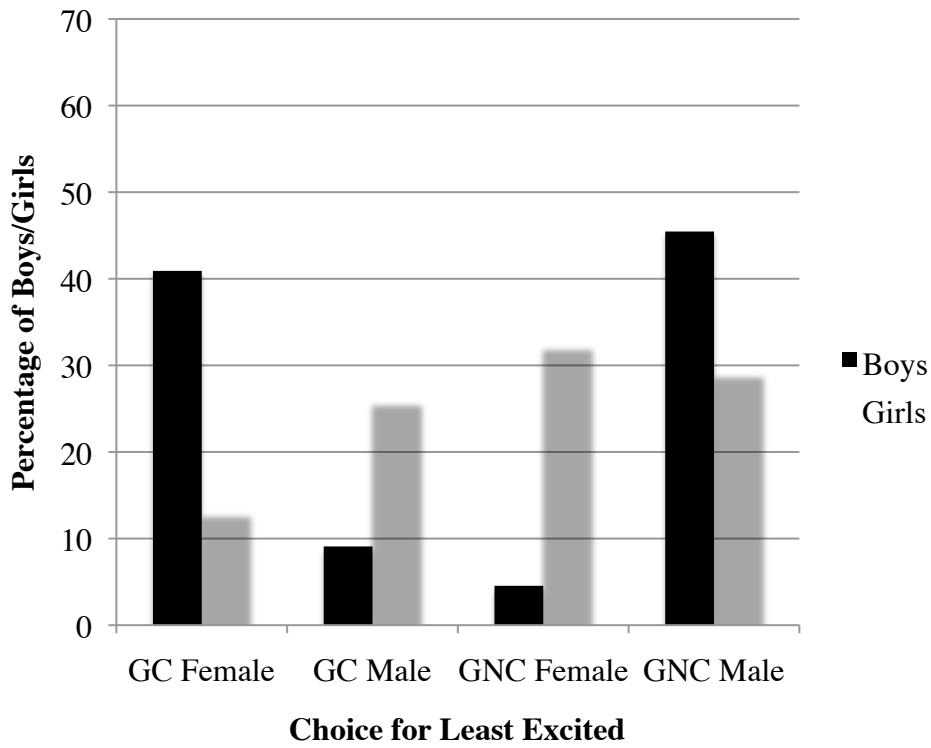


Figure 2. Choice for least excited by participant’s gender. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming. Boys were least excited about the GNC boy and GC girl. Girls were least excited about the GNC girl and GNC boy.

Appendix A

Student Survey

NAME:

SCHOOL:

CLASS:

SEX:

BIRTHDAY (Month/Day/Year):

STUDENT ID#:

Shade Circles Like This--> ●

Not Like This--> ~~○~~ ○

PRACTICE QUESTION

How often do you...

Play football?

Never	A little	Sometimes	A lot
○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions about the activities that you engage in. If you have any problems or questions as you go along, just raise your hand and one of us will help you.

How often do you...

1. Do cartwheels or somersaults?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
2. Play videogames?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
3. Play school or pretend to be a teacher?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
4. Play with dolls?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
5. Make bracelets or other jewelry?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
6. Play with remote control cars, trucks, or helicopters?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
7. Dance or take dance lessons?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
8. Play wrestle?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○
9. Jump rope?	Never ○	A little ○	Sometimes ○	A lot ○

10. Sing?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
11. Play with action figures?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
12. Play football?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
13. Play dress-up?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
14. Watch sports on TV?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
15. Watch movies about falling in love?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
16. Read car magazines or watch car racing on TV?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
17. Play with Legos?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O
18. Watch action films?	Never O	A little O	Sometimes O	A lot O

Who is good at sport?

Who always does nice things for other students?

Directions. Please circle the statement that best reflects you:

I have a lot of friends at school	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly Agree
	O	O	O	O	O

Directions. Now we have a few scenarios for you. Several students are interested in joining your class. Read the description and answer the questions following.

There is a student named **Emily** who is thinking about joining your class. She plays jacks and jump rope during playtime, and enjoys reading and dancing. Emily is a good story-teller and uses hand gestures when she talks. Her favourite stories are fairytales. She is polite and caring. She has long hair and often wears skirts and nice tops to school.

I am excited for Emily to join our class	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Don't mind ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○
--	------------------------	---------------	-----------------	------------	---------------------

Josh is thinking about joining your class. He likes to play outside and go fishing. He is good at football and basketball, which is his favourite sport. In the classroom, his favourite subject is maths. Josh is strong, independent, and self confident. He has short hair and often wears trousers and a shirt to school.

I am excited for Josh to join our class	Strongly Disagree ○	Disagree ○	Don't mind ○	Agree ○	Strongly Agree ○
---	------------------------	---------------	-----------------	------------	---------------------

Directions. Now we have a few scenarios for you. Several students are interested in joining your class. Read the description and answer the questions following.

A student named **Lauren** is thinking about joining your class. She likes to play football and doesn't mind getting her clothes dirty if there's a good game going on outside. She is a good runner and likes camping and being outdoors. Her favourite sport is football. She is strong and competitive. Lauren has short hair and often wears trousers and a t-shirt to school.

I am excited for Lauren to join our class	Strongly Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Don't mind <input type="radio"/>	Agree <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/>

Matthew is thinking about joining your class. He likes to do arts and crafts, play jump-rope outside, swing, and read. His favourite thing to do is to dress up like characters in stories and act out the plot. He is caring and is good at solving quarrels. Matthew has long hair and wears trousers and a shirt to school.

I am excited for Matthew to join our class	Strongly Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Don't mind <input type="radio"/>	Agree <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/>

Turn over this packet and raise your hand when you've finished!

Appendix B

Script/Procedure

1. Parent Informed Consent Forms will be sent home two weeks prior to the investigation. Parents will be asked to return the form if they agree to their student participating in the study.
2. At each student's seat are the Informed Assent Form and the Student Survey packet.
3. *Hi everyone! My name is Summer and I go to university in Florida, in the United States. I'm doing a project and I'd like to know more about what it's like to be a primary school student here and the kinds of activities you like to do. On the page in front of you there is information about what we're about to do. When I'm finished, you will be asked to fill out the survey in front of you, and then later, I will have a few questions to ask you individually. Read the Student Informed Assent Form. Does anyone have questions?*
4. *Please put your name at the bottom of the form and hand it in.*
5. Collect forms
6. *On the first page of the packet, fill out your name, school, class and birthday. Put down your pencils and raise your hand when you've finished.*
7. *You will be asked how often you participate in certain activities. For example, if the question is how often do you play football? And Taylor plays every day during free time, the answer would be "a lot". If Taylor plays a few times a week, the answer would be "Sometimes", once a week would be "A little", and if Taylor never plays football, then they would shade in the "never" answer. Turn the page and do the practice question. Does anyone have questions?*
8. *The second part will ask about other students in the class. Remember that this is individual work and I'm the only one who sees your answers so be honest. Please keep your eyes on your own paper, too.*
9. *The last part gives some information about a few students who may join your class. Read the information and respond using the scale to show how excited you are to have them in class.*
10. *When you have finished, raise your hand and I'll collect your packet. We're about to get started! Any final questions?*
11. *Turn the page and start!*
12. Reading the questions aloud, students will have the opportunity to follow along and will respond appropriately. When they are finished, their packets will be collected.
13. After all packets are collected, students will be pulled aside one by one and asked the questions on the *Student Interview Outline*.
14. Upon completion of all student interviews, *Thank you for participating in this project! You've helped me to better understand what it is like to be a student here!*
15. Each student will receive a piece of candy.

Appendix C

Student Interview

Out of Emily, Josh, Lauren, and Matthew, who are you most excited to have in your class?

Why is that?

Who are you least looking forward to having in class?

Why is that?

Anything else you'd like to tell me about?

For Reference:

There is a student named **Emily** who is thinking about joining your class. She plays jacks and jump rope during playtime, and enjoys reading and dancing. Emily is a good story-teller and uses hand gestures when she talks. Her favourite stories are fairytales. She is polite and caring. She has long hair and often wears skirts and nice tops to school.

Josh is thinking about joining your class. He likes to play outside and go fishing. He is good at football and basketball, which is his favourite sport. In the classroom, his favourite subject is maths. Josh is strong, independent, and self confident. He has short hair and often wears trousers and a shirt to school.

A student named **Lauren** is thinking about joining your class. She likes to play football and doesn't mind getting her clothes dirty if there's a good game going on outside. She is a good runner and likes camping and being outdoors. Her favourite sport is football. She is strong and competitive. Lauren has short hair and often wears trousers and a t-shirt to school.

Matthew is thinking about joining your class. He likes to do arts and crafts, play jump-rope outside, swing, and read. His favourite thing to do is to dress up like characters in stories and act out the plot. He is caring and is good at solving quarrels. Matthew has long hair and wears trousers and a shirt to school.

Appendix D

Table A1

Student Interview Coding Key

Category	Description	Example
Masculine	Masculine-typed activities: including playing football, basketball, getting dirty, sporty, fishing, camping, acting like a boy	<p>“He likes football”</p> <p>“She likes going outdoors and playing games”</p> <p>“She doesn’t mind getting her clothes dirty”</p> <p>“She sounds boyish”</p>
Feminine	Feminine-typed activities: dressing up, playing jump rope/skipping, doing arts and crafts, storytelling, dancing, gesticulating, storytelling, acting like a girl	<p>“She likes doing things I like doing, skipping...”</p> <p>“Because of fairytales”</p>
Academics	References being good at school, maths, reading	<p>“She likes reading”</p> <p>“He likes maths”</p>
Character	Inner qualities/traits characteristics: polite, caring, strong, independent, self-confident, nice/not nice	<p>“She’s kind”</p> <p>“She’s caring”</p> <p>“He sounds like a good friend and helper”</p> <p>“He sounds a bit weird”</p> <p>“He’s boring”</p>
Physical	Visible characteristics: long/short hair, wears dresses/trousers (playing dress-up, however, is classified as a feminine activity)	<p>“I used to have long hair too”</p> <p>“She wears nice tops to school”</p>
Misc	Anything that explains their preference that does not fit into the above categories	<p>“He could teach me how to do spectacular art”</p> <p>“We already have a Josh in our class”</p>

Note. Any statement that articulates a participant’s reasoning for liking or not liking a person was coded. A single response could include multiple codes. Evaluations of reasoning and explicit mentions of commonalities were not coded.

Appendix E

Most Excited Choice	Rationale
GC Girl	<p>She likes doing things I like doing, skipping, reading, dancing, storytelling.</p> <p>She's caring and plays with other people.</p> <p>She's similar to myself, I'm just like that. We could be jumprope champions.</p> <p>I like writing stories and [GC girl] does too. She likes reading and wears nice tops to school.</p> <p>I'm basically just like her, I used to have long hair too.</p> <p>She's just like me, I do all of that stuff.</p> <p>She likes the things that I like, like jumping and skilling. I like that she's polite and caring.</p> <p>She likes to skip and read and is a good storyteller.</p> <p>Because she's a good storyteller and could probably read and understand. She likes skipping.</p> <p>Because she matches up with some of my personality. I like reading and dancing, she uses hand gestures and is polite and caring.</p> <p>I think we'd get on really well because we both like reading.</p> <p>Because I like jumping rope and she's kind.</p> <p>I enjoy reading and dancing and jumping rope, and I have long hair and I'm polite.</p> <p>She sounds like someone I'd like to play with and sounds nice. She likes the things that I like.</p> <p>She's a good storyteller.</p>
GC Boy	<p>Things in common like football and basketball.</p> <p>Sounds like I would enjoy him being in my class. He likes football.</p>

He likes football, my favorite sport. And basketball.

He sounds like a good friend and helper.

He likes playing outside and football like me.

He likes to play outside and football, which I like.

He likes maths and football, he has the same interests as me.

He likes football and basketball and fishing, and I do too. We have the same hobbies and I think we would get along good.

Because he likes to go outside and play football, and I like fishing, it's something we have in common.

Because he likes to play football and I like football, my favorite subject is maths as well as him. I like that he's strong, independent, and self-confident.

I think I will get on with [GC boy] the most because we both like football.

He's the most sporty, I do the same stuff as him.

He likes the same things I like, He likes sports and is independent.

He's good at football and basketball which is the same as me, and fishing.

Because he's more exciting and likes to go outside like me. He gets on with his work and doesn't get stuck easily.

He's sporty and likes playing outside and maths. I like those things.

My favorite sports are football and basketball. I'm strong, independent and self-confident. We're the same.

GNC Girl	She likes getting messy, similar to me. She likes sports, we have a lot in common. She plays football.
----------	---

She's like me, she likes to play football and doesn't mind getting dirty. People think girls always have to be uptight about getting their clothes dirty.

Because she's not afraid of losing and playing football. She's not afraid to speak up if something's not right.

She's kind.

She likes going outdoors and playing games.

She likes the stuff that I like, funning, football, I like outdoors.

She likes playing football and getting her clothes dirty.

She doesn't mind getting her clothes dirty. She plays football and so do I.

I would have good fun with her outside, she doesn't mind getting dirty. I like to do that too.

She's got mostly the same hobbies as me and sounds really fun. She likes to play football and get dirty.

She likes all the things I do, like football.

Because she likes to play football and so do I. She likes getting her clothes dirty, camping, and maths, and so do it. She has short hair and I like short hair.

She likes running and being outside, and I Like those things.

Because she'd help her team win at sports day, she's a bit like my sister. She likes wearing trousers like me.

I only like her a bit more than [GC boy] because she's a girl and I think I'd get along better with us. She likes sports and going outside like me.

She isn't a girly girl. She likes going outside and playing games.

She's more of a sporty girl. We'd be able to play all of the time. If I had a birthday party, she would come. Her favorite sport is football.

GNC Boy

It's good to have another funny person in your class. He would ...a person and mature.

He's more interested in things that I like to do. He doesn't seem too boisterous. He likes arts and crafts, he's caring and good at solving problems.

Because I like dressing up and love arts and craft. I'm also good at jumping room and he sounds great.

He could teach me how to do spectacular art.

Least Excited Choice	Rationale
GC Girl	<p>Because of fairytales. I don't really like stuff like that.</p> <p>I don't like playing jacks or jumprope. Because I wouldn't play with her a lot. She also likes fairytales.</p> <p>I'm not a fan of hand gestures or fairytales.</p> <p>Things that she likes, I don't like to do, like skipping and hand gestures I don't like.</p> <p>She likes reading and I don't like reading. I like her and I don't because I like dancing too.</p> <p>I don't think I'd get on with her. She has hobbies that I don't like, like jump rope and jacks.</p> <p>She doesn't like playing football. She's not nice.</p> <p>I think [GC girl] sounds boring because she doesn't do things like year 5.</p> <p>Because I like going outdoors and stuff, I don't like staying indoors.</p> <p>She plays jacks, I hardly ever jump rope. I don't like fairytales.</p> <p>Because she plays jacks and likes fairytales and I don't like those things.</p> <p>Because I don't like dancing, jacks, skipping, reading, or fairytales. If she chose a book we would have to listen to a fairytale.</p> <p>Because she could be nasty for no reason, or bossy.</p>
GC Boy	<p>Because I don't like fishing and I don't want to upset him.</p> <p>We already have a [GC boy's name] in class. I don't like boys with really long hair.</p> <p>He's the exact opposite to me, I don't like fishing or sports. I don't like maths, literacy is the best.</p> <p>Because he plays basketball, people who play basketball and competitive and get hurt.</p> <p>He likes fishing and I don't like fishing.</p> <p>He does football, and I don't like football.</p>

We already have one [GC boy's name].

Because I don't like people hat bug me, and it sounds like he would bug me. He might be meant to me and others.

Because he likes fishing and I don't. He likes doing sports but I only like certain ones.

[GN boy's name] here isn't nice to my friends.

GNC Girl She's not really a girly girl. She wouldn't like to hang out with me.

Because I'm not sporty and the competitive type. I'm not into football.

Because she plays football and everything opposite to me.

Because she likes football, and getting dirty. I don't like football.

She might want to go outside and I don't. I don't like football and running around and she does.

I like football but not as much, I don't like getting dirty. I don't like being outdoors or bugs.

I'm not the sort of girl who likes to get dirty if I had the option. I'm more of a girly girl versus a tomboy.

She's more sport and I don't like playing sports.

I don't like football and getting my clothes dirty.

She sounds a bit boyish. She plays football, fishing, camping...mud on you, she sounds boyish.

Although I like camping, I don't like football, getting dirty and running.

GNC Boy I didn't know boys like skipping, some boys don't like swings.

He likes studying. He has long hair, I especially don't like boys who like dressing up.

Long hair-I don't really like boys with long hair.

He's boring. He likes arts.

He's boring. He likes dressing up, girly, he's a girl. He's girly.

He likes to stay in class and do arts and craft, and I don't like to do art and craft.

He sounds fun, but not as fun as the others. He would be a bit like a girl to be honest.

He's like a girl. He's literally a girl because he likes dressing up.

He likes to do arts and crafts and dressup and that's kind of girlish. He has long hair and plays dressup.

He's the only one that likes to dress up.

He likes dressing up. He's not the person that I would hang around with.

I'm not good at crafts, it makes me not happy, I don't enjoy them, and [GNC boy] is good at them.

He dresses up and plays jump rope.

I think dressing up and acting out is weird if he's my age. It's a bit weird that a boy likes playing jump rope.

He likes dressing up and jump rope and I'm not into those things.

Because I'm not much into skipping and arts and crafts.

He has long hair and dresses up, he sounds like a girl. He sounds a bit weird.

Because he likes arts and crafts and dressing up like characters. If there was a production it would be okay.

Note. GC = gender conforming; GNC = gender nonconforming.